

TONOLI TALK

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BRINGING RESEARCH TO LIGHT

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Under Photonic, Optical and Electronic Materials Research, Jim Andrews and Michael Crescimanno, physics professors at Youngstown State University, were recently awarded a grant for \$129,750 by the National Science Foundation for Research into a process they call coherent perfect rotation.

Coherent perfect rotation perfectly converts light from one polarization to another, which will optimize the processing of light.

Crescimanno and Andrews started working together six years ago. Crescimanno had returned from Harvard where a fellow colleague was doing research, using nanoparticles to perform magneto-optic rotation, which Crescimanno was skeptical about.

"I kind of derisively called it nanojunk, and I remember coming back, and [Andrews] was into this nanolayered polymer stuff," Crescimanno said. "I remember when we first talked about it I was skeptical about it, and then we ended up collaborating."

Since then they have done a lot of work on lasers. They found a way to make lasers from polymers rather than silicon, which can allow you to stretch, fold or change the temperature of the polymer to alter the wavelength.

Research done at Yale involving anti-lasers led them to investigate the idea of coherent perfect rotation. An anti-laser absorbs coherent light — a type of light that is made

up of waves all in the same wavelength and in phase — and turned into a type of internal energy.

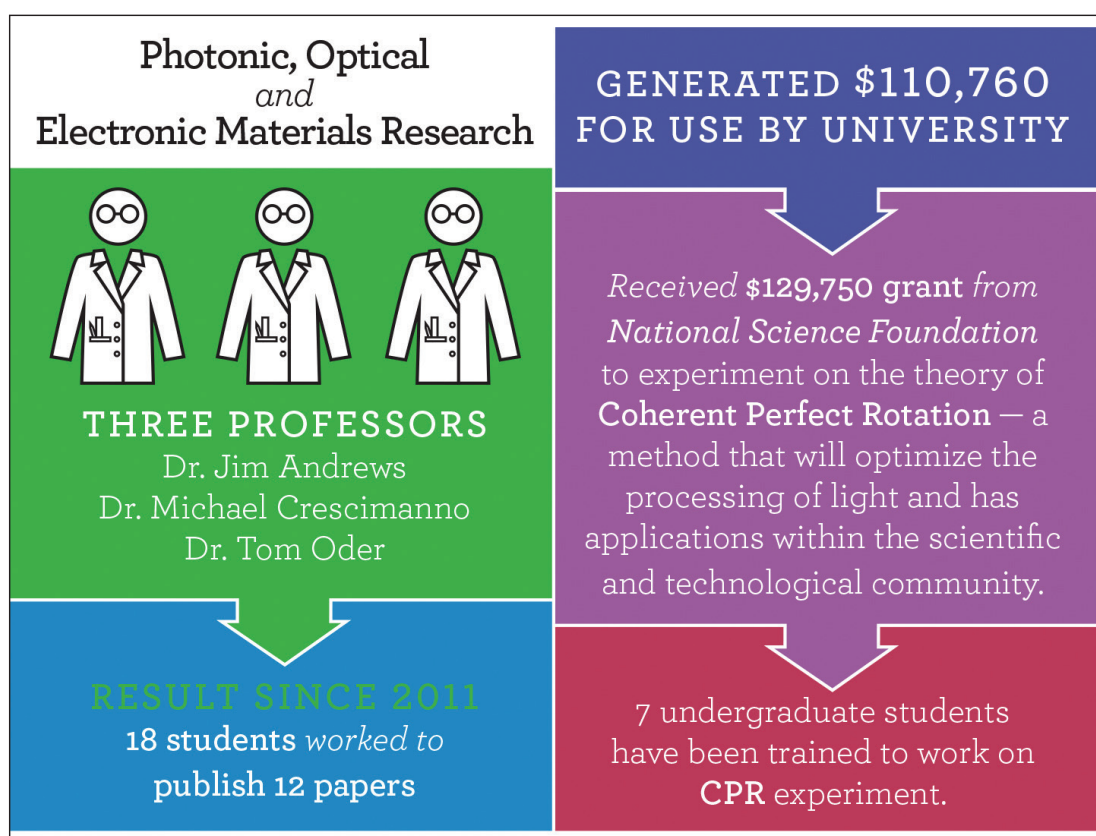
"[An anti-laser] is a system that instead of taking energy and coherently producing light out like a laser, it involves sending coherent light in and having nothing come out," Andrews said.

Scientists have developed materials that do not emit photons, the elementary particle that light and all other forms of electromagnetic radiation are composed of, but those materials have limitations in their utility. The anti-laser and coherent perfect rotations are more flexible.

"If you create that kind of exotic material, you basically have the material and that's what its properties are," Andrews said. "What the Yale group did that's different, and what we're doing that's different, is we can turn it on and off at will with the interference properties of our light fields. They can turn the blackness of something on and off, and we can turn the polarization properties of a system on and off by controlling them with another light beam."

Crescimanno used noise-cancelling headphones as a way of understanding the technology.

"What do those things do? They listen to the ambient noise field of the sound and they generate kind of anti-noise. So the two waves, when they meet your eardrum, destructively interfere. So in a sense what we're doing is kind of related to that, but it uses interference and symmetry in a



GRAPHIC BY STACY RUBINIC/THE JAMBAR.

more profound way," he said.

Their technology also preserves the energy in the light, as opposed to absorbing it.

"[An anti-laser is] just kind of a place where light goes and dies. But actually making something that can controllably change the polarization of light technologically might be more useful than just something to absorb it, because you're not losing light, you're still processing light," Crescimanno said. "In a sense, what we're talking about is a very high efficiency way of processing that light. [When you're] just absorbing light, it's gone, [and] you can't do anything subsequently with it, but with ours you could."

Andrews elaborated.

"In our scheme, which involves this polarization of light, we're just converting the light from one polarization to another perfectly. And if you then take that field and want to convert it back or use it for something else, it's all there," he said. "The efficiency of the switching we could do is very high because we didn't lose any of the energy by doing this."

After they submit a paper about the technology, they hope to move on to miniaturizing it to increase the number of potential applications.

"What we got funded for in a sense was just a proof of principle, an experimental proof of principle for this the-

oretical idea, and we'd like to take it to the next stage," Crescimanno said.

Their research is also benefiting students.

"One thing that might be useful for readers to know is how many opportunities exist for students to get involved with an experiment either here or in other groups, and not just in physics," Crescimanno said. "So, if you're responsible and can work independently and have a little bit of drive. You can get paid while you're learning and doing this stuff and you really have your own experiment. Some of the stuff ended up being published."

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International Students Exchange Cultures on Campus



PHOTO BY ALYSSA PAWLUK/THE JAMBAR.

International students of Youngstown State University serve themselves in President Tressel's home for the International Student "Coffee Hour."

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Last Friday, the students at Youngstown State University were invited to the first annual international student "coffee hour" at University President Jim Tressel's home on campus.

Tressel said that the event

started as a result of a discussion with Phyllis Beard, the host of the international student coffee hour.

"We were with the international students at a little pre-Thanksgiving event at the Beard residence, and we were talking with a lot of the kids and said 'We ought to have a little something at the president's home,'" Tressel said.

International student coffee hours have been held every Friday at different locations on campus, but this event was the first to be held in the home of the university president.

There are more than 100 international students on campus and all were invited to attend the event.

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Barzak's Back Again

YSU Professor's Upcoming Book

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After critical success with both his novel "One For Sorrow" and the film it inspired, Christopher Barzak, associate professor of English at Youngstown State University, will be releasing a new novel on Sept. 8.

"Jamie Marks is Dead," the film adaptation of "One For Sorrow," was a critical success which helped introduce a new audience to Barzak's work, but before the glitz of his big screen debut, Barzak was hard at work writing — and completely re-writing — his upcoming novel "Wonders of the Invisible World."

Barzak's new novel will share both the location and themes of "One For Sorrow," placing the story where the paranormal world meets Youngstown.

"It's quite similar to 'One For Sorrow.' They share the same setting — characters will show up in Youngstown and there is a scene near the fountain at Fellows Riverside Gardens in Mill Creek Park," Barzak said. "It's also similar not just in setting, but also the type of book that it is — it's a story that takes place in a contemporary, familiar, real world atmosphere, but has a kind of supernatural system that's sort of working behind the scenes of the mundane world."

"Wonders of the Invisible World," while still featuring ghosts, will broaden the scope of the supernatural workings moving the world Barzak has created.

"It is a ghost story, but not in the sort of 'Jamie Marks is Dead.' It's more of a mystery in some ways ... this book is very much a mystery at the heart of it," Barzak said. "I think there's a bit more of a complex supernatural system to it — there's more than just ghosts. There's an entire sort of magical system that I think people will enjoy discovering."

Penning his new tale was a laborious process, one which

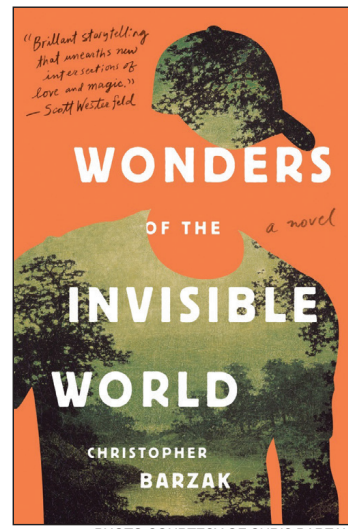


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS BARZAK.

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Passion for Human Resources: *Paige Rassega's Story*

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For Paige Rassega — who juggles school, work and extra activities — keeping a positive mind and attitude makes life a lot more enjoyable.

Rassega, a Mineral Ridge native concentrating in human resources, was chosen as one of six students nationwide to receive the 2014 Society of Human Resource Management Foundation Undergraduate Academic Award Scholarship.

"I have always been a proponent of applying for scholarships. Financial assistance is a necessity for many college students," Rassega said. "I am beyond grateful for receiving a SHRM Foundation scholarship. The SHRM Foundation provides young aspiring human resource professionals with the resources necessary to further our education."

Human resources is the function within a business that focuses on employment, management and providing direction for the people who work in the organization.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is globally recognized for shaping leadership and guidance. Rassega is president of YSU's student chapter of the SHRM.

"My favorite involvement on campus is being president of YSU's chapter," Rassega said. "It's opened to all undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in HR, regardless of their major. The student chapter supports students in the newly restructured, SHRM-certified curriculum by providing leadership and professional development opportunities including the hosting of guest speakers, business site visits and individual merit opportunities."

The student chapter of SHRM is supported by the department of management and the Western Reserve Chapter of SHRM, a local professional HR association.

The 21-year-old senior will graduate this spring, as she has already accepted a full-time position as human resources coordinator with the Brilex Group of Companies in Youngstown upon graduation. Rassega has been their human resources intern since last summer.

Rassega began her interest in human resources from her peer mentor who was assigned to her when she be-

gan her freshman year in college.

"She was pursuing her human resources degree, and she talked so highly about it. I decided to do some research and find out more information," she said.

With an interest in pursuing a career in business already, Rassega decided that human resources was a perfect fit for her.

"I found that human resources exists as a partner to the rest of any business organization to support the achievement of business strategy," Rassega said. "I feel that I have a strong business acumen and an interest in business performance, such as profits, growth, sustainability."

Rassega also proved herself to be a natural collaborator in her time at YSU. Her other involvements on campus include being a peer mentor at the Center for Student Progress, a student member of the Williamson College of Business Administration Dean's Student Leadership Council, as well as a member of the National Society for Collegiate Scholars, Sigma Alpha Lambda, Student Diversity Council and Golden Key Honor Society.

"I have enjoyed all of the opportunities that YSU offered me during my time here," she said.

Rassega also makes contributions to the community: she is a Big Sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Mahoning Valley program.

"I was matched to my Little Sister Brianna four years ago," she said. "Since we have been matched, her grades have improved, her attitude has changed and she is a much happier child. I believe that she has a more positive outlook on her life. Big Brothers Big Sisters is making a difference ... one child at a time."

Rassega expressed much appreciation to her role model Denise Carissimo, a human resource manager for the JMC Steel Group as well as a part-time faculty member in the department of management in the WCBA.

"She goes above and beyond the call of duty. She is an icon of guidance and leadership for students here at Youngstown State University. She has been a true advocate and mentor. She has been committed to my career development and has guided me toward the right path," she said. "She is more than just a professor; she is a mentor, a role model, an inspiration and a friend."

Rassega will be showing off her skills as she will be attending the 2015 SHRM Case Competition and Career Summit in Covington, Kentucky held April 24-25.

"It is wonderful to see such a dedicated organization to the field of human resources," she said.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Theater Department Presents Ten-Minute Play Festival Feb. 13, 14

Alpha Psi Omega, the theater honor society, is presenting a Ten-Minute Play Festival at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13 and at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14. The Festival will be in the Spotlight Theater in Bliss Hall, where four ten-minute plays exploring the different facets of love and relationships will be featured. One-minute segments will also be featured in-between the ten-minute plays. Students who attend and bring a guest to the Valentine's Day evening performance will receive a free flower and chocolates. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for senior citizens and students.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Therapy Dogs in the Classroom

Krystal Culler, a gerontology instructor, has started bringing a service dog into her classroom for a variety of reasons. Lady, Culler's canine trainee, has drawn some attention in and out of the classroom. Students enjoy having the dog around and have been visiting Culler's office before tests to relax while petting Lady. The main purpose of bringing the dog is to make students aware of how service animals can be used in social service careers, such as social work and gerontology.

YSU Alumnus and Fashion Designer To Visit Campus Feb. 19

Angel Rivera, a renowned couture fashion designer and YSU alumnus, is set to give a presentation at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19 in the Presidential Suites of Kilcawley Center. The Students in Fashion and Interiors (SIFI) organization is sponsoring the event. Rivera has worked for several companies since graduation, including the world-famous Kleinfeld bridal boutique. He's had his designs appear in several magazines, such as "Bride & Groom" and "Inside Weddings." For more from Rivera, visit <http://angel-riveracouture.com/>.

Students that attended the event were from all over the world. Maram Almaraihah, an international student from Jordan, came to the university to study business, and she is currently a pre-business major.

"Every week I go to the coffee hour. I like YSU. It is a good school to study at," Almaraihah said.

Desmond Appiah, a YSU student originally from Ghana, attended the coffee hour to make new friends.

"We mingle with each other, talk to each other and make friends. We exchange culture. I learn about your culture, you learn about mine," Appiah said. "That's why I'm here ... to make new friends from all over the world."

Antti Aijanen, a psychology major at YSU from Finland, said that he went to the last coffee hour at the YWCA.

"I went to the coffee hour at the YWCA building. That was nice and I met a lot of new people, and when I heard that the coffee hour was here [Tressel's residence] I just wanted to

see the building," Aijanen said. "I've heard a lot about this building and I thought that it would be beautiful, and it was even more beautiful than I had thought."

Musha Guntaka, an international student at YSU who is studying for her master's in computer science, uses the events as a means for sharing her experiences via social media with friends in her home country.

"It is my first time attending the coffee hour, and I feel so bad I missed the other coffee hours. ... I would like to come to [more]," Guntaka said. "I [will] tell all my friends and everyone about them, and I can post my pictures so that they can [see] what YSU is like."

Tressel commented positively on the turnout of the event.

"It's great because we want everyone on our campus to feel welcome, especially when you are a long way from home," Tressel said. "Here we are on a Friday afternoon, they get a little something to eat, they can have a relaxing weekend, and I'm excited about what is happening."

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BARZAK PAGE 1

Andrews cited 12 papers since 2011 that have included 18 different YSU students as co-authors.

Michael Baker, a senior physics major, was a co-author on the most recent paper they had published.

"It was a great honor for them to ask me to help them with that paper," Baker said. "It's not an opportunity you usually get at other universities, to get published as an undergrad."

They've also used students outside the physics department as research assistants.

"We've had about a dozen students for the past two summers, each summer working with us and then students working during the regular school year from physics, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering and math," Andrews said. "And we're looking for more. We hope some students will be interested in joining us this summer."

It's an opportunity to do unprecedented things.

"We're doing fun things," Crescimanno said. "I think we can pretty confidently claim, the things we're doing, they've never been done anywhere else in the world."

spanned two continents and seven years before total completion.

"This one took about seven years to make, which is not my normal style of writing a novel. ... Obviously I wasn't working on consistently through those years, so I would say if I condensed the time it probably took about three years to write," Barzak said. "I started in the summer of 2004, right before I moved to Japan. I put it down after I moved to Japan ... I just had to focus my writing towards the experience of living in a different culture."

Even after picking the book back up following his time in Japan, Barzak found the novel difficult to construct.

"At a certain point I went back to this book, and it was a really long and arduous journey with it after I committed to finishing it," he said. "The first few drafts were really difficult — I was having a hard time finding the right angle for the story. ... After draft three, I decided I actually had to put aside all the work I had done and sort of reconceptualize the plot and start from page one. I hadn't done that with a book before this one and had heard other authors' horror stories about doing that ... but ultimately after I finished the new draft, I knew I had the right book."

"Wonders of the Invisible World" will be released Sept. 8 through Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

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Youngstown's Peak Attraction: The Summit 90.7

GABRIELLE FELLOWS
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Music connoisseurs and concert buffs will be rejoicing with the news that the Akron, Ohio-based radio station The Summit is now planning to extend their entertainment more into Youngstown. The adult alternative radio station with a reputation for variety will be planning more of its premium concerts to venues in downtown Youngstown.

The Summit began in Akron, but has a local stream out of the Struthers High School that is broadcast at 90.7 FM for listeners in the Mahoning Valley to enjoy. Locals who support the station via monthly donation receive perks, such as a CD with up-and-coming songs as well as early sale and exclusive concert tickets.

On Monday evening, from 5:30-7 p.m., The Summit sponsored British band Scars on 45 at the Nove Gatto on the first floor of the Erie Terminal Building with an after-party that followed at Suzie's Dogs

and Drafts.

With the news that the station is planning on bringing more events to Youngstown and its businesses, Erin Driscoll, director of Student Activities and board member of The Summit, recommended that people who are interested keep their eyes and ears open.

"The Summit is really looking to extend their reach into Youngstown more. In fall 2013, Penguin Productions partnered with The Summit and brought the David Wax Museum to Kilcawley Center for the students and Summit members. Last year in October of 2014, I was invited to become a member of the Summit's board, the first one from Youngstown. They really want to reach out to Youngstown members more and reach the young adult population in our city and connect to the resources," Driscoll said. "This show ... is about connecting the station with the leaders in Youngstown arts to hopefully build more relationships and move forward. The Summit is definitely interested in doing more shows in Youngstown — with the community and



PHOTO CREDIT BY GABRIELLE FELLOWS/THE JAMBAR.

the university."

Tom Bruno, general manager of The Summit, said that events, such as the Scars on 45 show, are to be expected in the months to come.

"In 2015, we're planning on bringing Summit artists to the Valley for the members of the station. It started out very small, 10 to 20 people, and now hundreds of people

are members of the station, and this is our way of thanking them," Bruno said. "A lot of stations use coffee mugs and shirts, but we offer our members thanks face-to-face through concerts."

The Summit's shows are specifically to thank members of the nonprofit radio station. Members get access to exclusive shows, have the oppor-

tunity to order presale tickets for certain concerts and get special gifts through the mail. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member can learn more information by visiting <http://www.913thesummit.com> and clicking the "become a member" option under the "support" tab.

Sweethearts Gather for OK Sweetheart

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Valentine's Day is less than a week away, and Youngstown State University's Student Activities has prepared upcoming events that students and faculty can attend in celebration.

On Feb. 12, OK Sweetheart — a Smart Pop musician from Seattle, Washington — will be performing for students and faculty in the Lariccia International Student Lounge in Kilcawley Center from 8 to 10 p.m.

Two YSU students, Casey D'Ambrose and Dan Calia, will open the show for OK Sweetheart, with Calia on acoustic guitar.

Student Activities, in partnership with the Student Catholic Association, are sponsoring the event and will also be hosting a "Concert With A Cause."

Taylor Phillips, a Student Activities student intern, explained the purpose of "Concert With A Cause."

"OK Sweetheart is a great woman singer from Seattle,



PHOTO CREDIT OF SURFERGIRL30/Flickr.com CC BY 2.0. "VALENTINE'S DAY ROSE."/THE JAMBAR.

you have probably heard of her in One Tree Hill and 90210. [Student Activities is] starting this concert as a series of 'Concerts With A Cause.' Student Activities is partnering with clubs on campus. This concert is meant to bring awareness to student organizations and help them with

their organization fundraising," Phillips said.

Housing and Residential Life is showing a Nicholas Sparks movie on Feb. 11 in the Presidential Suite in Kilcawley Center, and Athletics, in partnership with First Year Student Services, is hosting a basketball double

header.

On Feb. 13, the department of counseling, special education and school psychology, The Reading and Study Skills Center, the office of assessment, The English Language Institute, the department of recreation and the office of career services are present-

ing "Love, Friendship, Dating and Relationships on U.S. Campuses" from 12 to 2 p.m.

Stambaugh Stadium is also presenting a Dinner Theater Show.

To those who are interested in embarking off campus for Valentine's Day, there are some other events to check out.

Radiolark is playing at Cedars on Feb. 14 at 10 p.m. for a \$5 cover fee.

LaKisha Jones, Haley Scannato and Matt Giraud — three finalists from American Idol — will sing love songs with the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra backing them for the Symphonic Valentines: Symphony Idol. It will be happening in Powers Auditorium-DeYor Performing Arts Center.

The B&O Station is putting on the Ostatki Polish Carnival Celebration on Saturday, Feb. 14 at 6:30 p.m. There will be guided tastings of imported Polish vodka, beers and liquors, along with a buffet dinner and music.

For more events visit the Student Activities website.

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EDITORIAL

Good Times For Sale and the Legend of Jack White's Guacamole

Let's talk about a conspiracy involving Jack White, guacamole, Oklahomans and higher education.

Before the juicy conspiracy kicks in, some backstory. Last week the Oklahoma Daily — Oklahoma University's student newspaper — disclosed aspects of Jack White's contract for playing a show at the university, which focused on White's particular and specific recipe for chunky guacamole, special preparations for a post-concert steak and a stern ban on any bananas in the venue.

Following the publishing of the story, Jack White responded to the article during his concert, admonishing students to avoid law and journalism degrees and criticizing OU's campuswide tobacco ban. Seeing as how most people who hate the law and journalists tend to be corrupt and most people who smoke tend to be dead or dying, White's advice may be worth some degree of scrutiny.

In response to the OU Daily's article, the booking company William Morris Endeavor Entertainment — not Jack White or his managing company as is being incorrectly reported in some publications — blacklisted the university, claiming they feared the student newspaper might treat other artists they represent in a similar fashion.

Ultimately, there wasn't a whole lot of boom to accompany all the bangs the Daily was making about White. The individuals who put the

concert together, OU's Campus Activities Council, only incurred a \$1,000 net loss and nearly all the money the university spent on White's booking was made back in ticket sales.

A letter to the editor from OU's Campus Activities Council was published in the Daily, which expounded on the CAC's dismay with the Daily for the publishing of White's contract details and the subsequent fallout with the booking agency.

While OU's CAC may have had a point that the article in question was more tabloid than muckrake — and here at The Jambar there would never be any nonsense like that published, not when there are crepes and weird smells to discuss — something they included in their letter to the editor was far more nefarious than expensive concerts or journalistic mockery.

Near the end of the letter, the CAC says "It is our hope that in the future, the OU Daily will continue to exercise their right of freedom of the press, while maintaining a reasonable level of respect for other prominent artists that choose our university and support CAC's mission to strengthen the student experience here at OU."

"Strengthen the student experience" is the worrying line here. Since when did the student experience involve Jack White elaborating on the benefits of a philosophy degree? Since when did it

have anything to do with anything other than getting an education?

This editorial is not claiming OU's CAC has any malevolent intent. In all likelihood, the group is full of dedicated students and faculty working hard to make their campus a more enjoyable place to be for students, a feat they accomplished by bringing Jack White to their campus.

That being said, the idea of the "student experience" is the biggest sham in higher education, and it's the Kool-Aid major universities have been using to sell a lackluster education to the droves of undergraduates who are forced through their doors by the job market and pressures from family and school counselors, regardless of their readiness for higher education.

We now live in an age where athletic departments have higher technology than physics labs and schools spend major slices of their budget on concerts and festivals, like when the University of Buffalo's Student Association spent 14 percent of its budget bringing Bob Dylan to their campus in 2013.

It's more than a conspiracy. In his book "Beer and Circus: How Big Time College Sports Is Crippling Undergraduate Education," Murray Sperber, former Indiana University professor — who received death threats following his public criticism of notorious Indiana Hoosiers' basketball coach Bob Knight

— made an accusation about the modern college experience that sums up the trend.

"I concluded that many universities, because of their emphasis on their research and graduate programs, and because of their inability to provide quality undergraduate education to most of their [non-honors undergraduate] students, spend increasing amounts of money on their athletic departments, and use big-time college sports — commercial entertainment around which many undergraduates organize their hyperactive social lives — to keep their students happy and distracted and the tuition dollars rolling in," Sperber said.

There are some similarities between what Sperber is describing and recent events at YSU: the somewhat recent rebranding of YSU to include the tagline "urban research institution;" the creation of a graduate college and the broadening of the Honors College; an increased encroaching of the athletics department into the YSU budget general fund; the hiring of a controversial but well-loved football coach to coach football following the hiring of a controversial but well-loved football coach to run the university.

Does YSU fit the bill for a school that is selling experience over education?

It doesn't seem so, at least not yet. Being a commuter school, it is harder to sell the "college experience" as a large-scale distraction when

most students spend only their class hours on the campus and, to be fair, YSU has some very good academic programs and faculty.

The answer is better determined on an individual basis. Students need to look at their own experiences and ask themselves some questions about their education: do you feel you are actually learning a skill, or are you doing busy work to fill time; do you have access to your professors and the ability to communicate regularly and clearly with them; do you have opportunities for producing tangible evidence of what you are learning; are you being challenged?

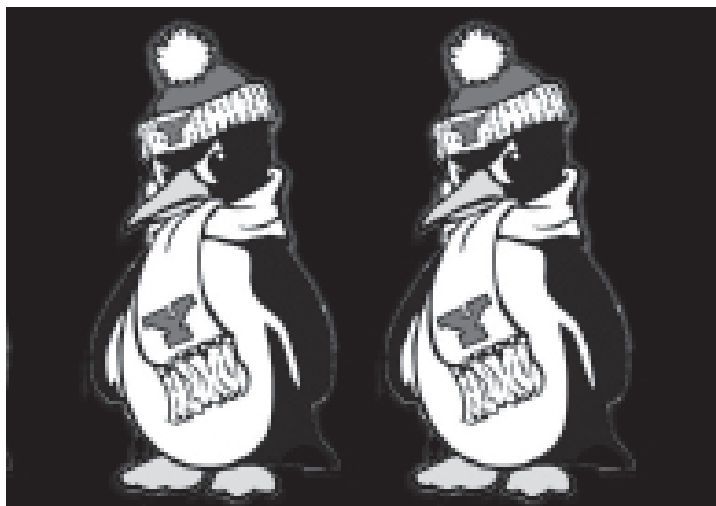
If any student answers the majority of those questions in the negative, then something needs to change in their academic life.

Go to Penguins games, enjoy Penguin Productions hard work, make friends, explore the area, go to concerts. Do all of that. Everyone should do that. It doesn't take going into crippling student loan debt for that experience, however.

Don't buy into the "student experience" over education.

If students are going to shell out tens of thousands of dollars for an education, it's their responsibility to themselves and the taxpayers who help fund public universities to demand that they get their money's worth from their college.

You bought an education. Make sure you get it.



JAMBAR POLICY

Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Collegiate Press honors. The Jambar is published twice weekly during the fall and spring semesters and weekly during the first summer session. Mail subscriptions are \$25 per academic year. The first copy of The Jambar is free. Additional copies of The Jambar are \$1 each.

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The editorial board that writes Our Side editorials consists of the editor-in-chief, the managing editor, the copy editor and the news editor. These opinion pieces are written separately from news articles. They draw on the opinions of the entire writing staff and do not reflect the opinions of any individual staff member. The Jambar's business manager and non-writing staff do not contribute to editorials, and the adviser does not have final approval.

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Fifty Shades of Normalcy?

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It is the day for love. It is also the day for complaining and incessant Instagram pictures of either inspirational quotes from the lonely singles or endless bragging about the beautiful tokens of appreciation from all the couples — it's Valentine's Day, of course.

What's coming to theaters this holiday isn't your typical love movie, however. It's the taboo that makes some of us — like my usually otherwise outspoken co-worker would say — blush.

Our culture is quickly adapting to a sexier norm, and there is less impropriety in matters of sex and the discussion of it. The first movie of this book trilogy is coming out the day before Valentine's Day, full of sex and BDSM — which is typically understood as an array of sexual practices involving dominance and submission — for what some people are saying is one of the more unabashed and explicit explora-

tions of sexuality in popular culture.

According to "Explaining 'Fifty Shades' wild success," published on cnn.com in July 2012, Emanuella Grinberg said, "Whatever the case, sex has long been selling erotic tales, earning spots on best-seller lists and testing attitudes toward sexuality."

This test of attitudes is so true, because the more people talk about this phenomenon, the easier it is being accepted by audiences. And the easier it is accepted, the more people voice opinions and talk about the ugly — but necessary — topics that make us uneasy to be open and honest about.

"Influencing this shift in sexuality is popular culture," said Justin R. Garcia, Chris Reiber, Sean G. Massey and Ann M. Merriwether in "Sexual hook-up culture," published in February 2013 on apa.org — the American Psychological Association's website. "The media have become a source of sex education. ... The themes of books, plots of movies and television shows, and lyrics of numerous songs all demonstrate a permissive sexuality among consumers."

When you're practically

eating, sleeping and breathing in this information-driven culture, it is hard not to get used to hearing about sex all the time.

In "What's So Special About Fifty Shades of Grey? It's Not Just About The Sex" published on Huffingtonpost.com in April 2013, Linda Bloom, a best-selling author and relationship expert, discusses the inner-workings of the infamous novel-gone-movie to be released for this Valentine's Day.

"I believe it has a lot to do with the desire that so many of us have of being swept away from our mundane lives and into a world of passion and ecstasy," Bloom said.

Bloom further explains that this series is the modern fairytale taking on an adjusted setting and circumstance — ending the same with a happy ending of luxury and living happily-ever-after.

Love it or hate it, good or bad, "Fifty Shades of Grey" is one part of an explosive shift in the cultural opinion of sexuality and sexual exploration — blurring the line between what is considered normative and what is atypical. We will likely see a different world to adapt to once the smoke is cleared.



'I Think We're Going to be Really Successful'

YSU Baseball Starts Season at Jacksonville State

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It's that time of year again, when snow and ice blanket the campus and students look for any sign that spring is on the way. There is a glimmer of hope: America's pastime made its annual return to Youngstown State University.

The YSU baseball team will start its season on Feb.

13 on the road against Jacksonville State University. The team will start on the road until the middle of March.

"We're going down to Alabama [and] North Carolina," senior pitcher Ryan Krokos said. "We tell them to stay focused. There's going to be good teams we're facing. They're no different than us, so we have to go out there and always compete."

The Penguins are looking to build on their Horizon League Championship sea-

son from last year. The team is proud of their success last season, but knows that success in the upcoming season will require continued work.

"I think it was pretty big," senior Kevin Hix said. "It gives us a little more momentum heading into this year. Recruiting-wise we got more interest, so players coming in know what we can do and what we are expecting from them. They are going to be ready to go and try to get some more wins and try to get a repeat."

With an influx of new transfer players and incoming freshmen, the veteran players have taken it upon themselves to help the young roster develop.

"Usually whenever we are done practicing we try to show them everything we were taught last year — we try to implement that with them," Hix said. "The coaches are telling them to do all that, and we try to make sure what the Youngstown State baseball way is for preparation and everything that we do."

Head coach Steve Gillispie said that the team needs to learn from their poor start last season. The baseball team had a 12-36 record before the Horizon League Tournament.

"The biggest expectation is that we play more consistently throughout the year — that we know better how to compete on a day-to-day basis," Gillispie said. "I don't think you go into it thinking saying 'I expect to win another championship.' There's a lot that needs to happen for us to be successful or have a successful season outside of the postseason."

Gillispie has high expectations for the sophomores on the roster. Some of them competed as freshmen last season and the coaching staff looks to see improvement from the young team.

"Lorenzo Arcuri has shown that he has made the jump from a freshman to a sophomore," he said. "Alex Larivee had a very good freshman year. He's kind of a guy we could go to — he was an all-conference selection a year ago. Kevin Yarbinec and Jeremy Quinlan are two sophomore pitchers that throw really significant innings at the end of last year. That right there are four sophomores that should be the mainstays for a couple of years for us."

Krokos echoed Gillispie's optimism for the upcoming season — citing the player's work ethic as the key to success this season.

"I think we are going to be really successful," Krokos said. "We got a lot of guys who play hard on the field and if we keep playing hard we will see a lot of success. We are heading in the right direction."



Senior pitcher Ryan Krokos played in 13 games last season, starting 11 games. Krokos started in Youngstown State University's Horizon League Championship victory against Wright State University on May 24, 2014.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RON STEVENS

Club Racquetball Takes Serve at YSU



The Youngstown State University racquetball team competed in a tournament in Oxford, Ohio on Jan. 17. Alexis Allison finished as the runner-up in the women's singles competition.

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Singles. One-ups. Ironman. What do all these words have in common? They all pertain to the game of racquetball. Believe it or not, the racquetball team has been competing as a club sport at Youngstown State University for years now.

Andy Innocenzi and Nick Conti captain the women and men's clubs, respectively. Starting the racquetball club was Conti's idea upon his transfer to YSU from Butler County Community College.

"I noticed that the university already set up the rac-

quetball courts," Conti said. "This is the perfect place to have a team and when I looked into it, I noticed there was no team or club, so I started the process of finding out how and if I could start a team. I just thought 'What a great place to have a team or club.'"

This is where Innocenzi, an experienced racquetball player, entered the picture.

"I knew just about everybody on campus that played the game," Innocenzi said. "When Nick came to me with the idea of starting a team, I just started getting everybody I knew who played and set up practice times and made it official."

Conti still had to form a roster and clear proper chan-

nels with YSU before getting final approval.

"Everybody gave me the name that Andy was the unofficial ambassador of racquetball on campus," he said.

After Conti and Innocenzi met, the racquetball club was born.

Innocenzi described racquetball as being like ping-pong, tennis or any net game.

"The goal of the game is to hit the ball off of the front wall and make it bounce two times before your opponent gets it," he said. "If you hit it off the front wall, it's equivalent to getting it over the net in volleyball or tennis. From there, it's just back and forth."

As of right now, Conti estimates that there are 20

players officially on the team's roster. There are additional players that practice with the team but are not part of the active roster.

"We have 20 who signed up and other people who aren't signed up who come and play regularly with us," he said. "We probably have right around 30 people in the group, give or take a few. We have optional practices that aren't mandatory, so we get about 10 to 15 people at every practice."

When Innocenzi came to YSU, he'd never even heard of racquetball.

"I saw the courts here and someone showed me how to play, and I fell in love with it," he said. "I got beat 15-0 my first game and I became

addicted to it. You want to get better and better, be like that person that beat you, and from there you start practicing every single day. Nick and I are the top two players on this team."

The team, which practices Monday through Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m., plays competitively in the Mid-American Racquetball Conference (MARC) against schools like Akron University, University of Dayton, Ohio State University, Purdue University and University of Cincinnati. In the first meet in Akron, both the men's and women's teams placed second in the conference out of eight schools. The team's next meet is this weekend against Ohio State.